

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY Czechoslovakia

REPORT

SUBJECT Pharmaceuticals

DATE DISTR. 8 April 1953

NO. OF PAGES 3

DATE OF INFO.

REQUIREMENT

25X1

PLACE ACQUIRED

REFERENCES

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1. The barbiturates or hypnotics, other than diethyl-barbituric acid (barbital or veronal), which were available and used in Czechoslovakia are: Cibalgin, Optalidon, Veramon, Allonal, Bial, Evipan, Scnifen. All of these were available only on doctors' prescription, and [] all were available in adequate quantity.

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2. The analgesics, other than aspirin and codeine, which were available and used [] were: Cibalgin, Optalidon, Saridon, Veramon. Until May or June 1952, aspirin could be purchased freely at any drugstore in packages of five tablets for 2.50 crowns. After May or June 1952, however, aspirin could be bought only with a doctor's prescription. The only reason for curtailing the sale of aspirin [] was simply to save on available stocks, since there was hardly any danger in taking an overdose. Analgesics could be purchased only with a doctor's prescription.

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3. Codeine, the methymorphine derivative, was available but it was simply harder to obtain. There had always been a large consumption of cough syrups in Czechoslovakia. One of the main ingredients of a good cough syrup is codeine. Prior to 1948, each druggist and pharmacist compounded his own cough syrup, and managed to derive a thriving business from the practice. After the nationalization of

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pharmacies in 1948 the Communist Regime noted that this practice necessitated the use of large amounts of sugar. Because of the provisions of the compulsory health insurance law the state insurance company had to pay for the cough syrups. This proved too expensive and as a result it was decided that cough syrups could be purchased only on doctors' prescriptions. This resulted in a considerable reduction in the consumption of sugar as well as saving money for the insurance company. It is common knowledge among doctors and pharmacists that the USSR, Czechoslovakia and other Satellites have ample supplies of morphine and opiates.

4. The antispasmodics, which were available and used in Czechoslovakia were: Atropine (available in adequate amounts), nicotinium hydrochloricum, Belladonna, Bella foline, trichlorethylene, Luminalets (0.015 gm. Luminal). All were available only with a doctor's prescription.
5. Cardiac medicines, other than digitalis, which were available and used in Czechoslovakia were: Calcium chloratum (administered intravenously, it dilates the blood veins, thus relieving pressure on the heart), Tinctura convallariae, Tinctura Adonidis.
6. A great deal of success has been achieved in the cultivation of ergot in Czechoslovakia.

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location of several ergot-producing fields; some were in the Sumava Mountains in southwestern Bohemia; the others in the Krkonose Mountain Range in northern Bohemia. Each field was about one or two hectares in size. The Ministry of Agriculture was allegedly looking for more suitable locations for fields, and for specialists to work on these projects. Czechoslovakia had always produced a small amount of ergot. Since 1949, there seemed to be an increased demand for ergot

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It is used in the treatment of womens' diseases, i.e. malfunction of the female organs, and as an aborticide.

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Poland, Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia, were the largest suppliers of ergot before World War II.

7. Farmers in Czechoslovakia were paid 1,200 crowns per kilogram of ergot, which they had picked from their fields of wheat. Before World War II, most of the ergot came from flour mills where it was separated during the grain-cleaning process, and the quality was not too good. In the last few years, however, as a result of controlled cultivation, the quality has improved. Ergot was carefully picked by hand, and few of the stems were broken; this was one of the chief reasons for the poor quality before World War II. When an ergot stem is broken, the air oxidizes both ends of the stem, eventually ruining it. The final product, ergotin, must be protected from light rays.

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9. [redacted] three men who were directly connected with the program for cultivating ergot in Czechoslovakia;

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a. Prof. Dr. (fnu) SKARNITZEL, professor of pharmacology at Charles University in Prague, lectured quite frequently on ergot. He acted as adviser to the people in charge of the project and was considered an authority on the cultivation of ergot.

b. Docent Dr. Rudolf (?) KRKOSKA, former head of the Research Institute for the Cultivation of Plants in the Ministry of Agriculture

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[redacted] He was directly connected with the ergot program

c. Dr. (fnu) NOVAK worked for the Ministry of Agriculture, and on location in the ergot fields.

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